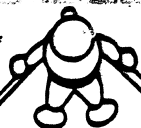


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# MATWATCH

JUNE 5-11, 1989

213 PINE HILLS AVE. AUBURN, AL. 36830 (205) 325-7522

VOL. 1, NO. 50

## Steve's Sidelights By Steve Beverly

RATINGS: THE REAL MEANING

A few months back, we offered a short course in how television syndication works, particularly so you could have a better grasp on how and why your favorite promotion's show is sold, moved or canceled.

As we near the end of a year of MATWATCH, we thought it prudent to examine the real meaning behind the numbers you see in RATINGS RAP every week.

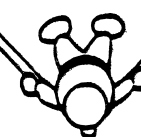
We emphasize the rating points for the weekly "horse race" because they are indicative of total numbers of viewers. But a rating point adds up to different totals for different cable networks because their universes vary. As of this writing, TBS is seen in 48.5 million homes and USA in 46.8 million. So one rating point equals 485,000 homes on TBS vs. 468,000 for USA. Therefore, the cable industry looks closer at audience shares, the percentage watching of all people with sets in use at a given hour.

If a wrestling show---or any other---draws a 5% share, it is considered successful. If the share goes to a 6 or 7, that program is considered a hit.

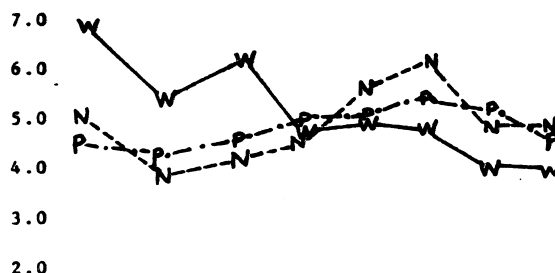
As you can see by the graph, the downward spiral for WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING hasn't been an overnight crash. With the exception of a short rally last December, the MCM dip as cable's most dominant wrestling show actually started after May 1988's Tallahassee special, which highlighted a month at a 6.8% share at 6:05 Saturdays. By September, that figure had dropped to a 5.4---led by months of all-squash shows from Dusty Rhodes. Only when Dusty added weekly angles and benefited from the heat of the Jim Cornette-Paul E. Dangerously confrontations did the shares rally and peak at a 6 in December.

Part of the collapse, admittedly---from TBS' standpoint---came from the moving of MCM to 7:05 p.m., coupled with the weak U.S. OLYMPIC GOLD lead-in. But the three George Scott-booked months were brutal, as MCM hovered in the 4.6-4.7 range and lost many of its marginal weekly viewers. But the recent floating MCM schedule, which made the show harder to find than a hair on Telly Savalas' head, resulted in a record low 3.9 average share during May---figures which obviously triggered TBS to return MCM to 6:05 in two weeks.

Looking at the graph in January, you can see where WWF PRIME TIME WRESTLING on USA took control from MCM---and the gap widened every month until a slight narrowing in May, when the Monday night USA show faced heavy network sweep competition.



MAY '88	SEPT. '88	DEC. '88	JAN. '89	FEB. '89	MAR. '89	APR. '89	MAY '89
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PCT. SHARES FOR CABLE WRESTLING SHOWS  
 May 1988 - May 1989

P - PRIME TIME W - WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP  
 N - NWA MAIN EVENT

The growth patterns of NWA MAIN EVENT have been dramatic until its recent meltdown. In September, plagued by repeated airings of matches such as Kevin Sullivan vs. Big Bear Collie, NWE dipped to a 3.8 share. But when the format changed to first-run matches and the Jim Ross-Dangerously combo clicked, NWE's shares jumped 33% from January to March alone. The show is still doing acceptable shares in the near-5 range but one wonders why the sudden drop after the CLASH V special in April.

If you wonder what the bottom line to all these figures are, it's \$\$\$\$\$. When the ratings and shares go up, the prices for advertisers increase inside wrestling shows. According to CHANNELS Magazine, a 30-second spot in Vince McMahon's syndicated and cable package of six weekly hours, which currently delivers larger audiences, costs \$35,000. With six minutes of national ad time each week, Titan will gross around \$420,000 a week or \$22 million a year just on commercials alone. After ad agency commissions, account executives' cuts and discounts for package deals are deducted, Titan will still probably net \$13 million a year on TV advertising, enough to cover its estimated \$250,000 a week in production expenses.

On Turner's side, five minutes of national ads are sold in his package of five (and soon to be six) hours. Nine minutes go to local stations. Inside sources say time on the NWA shows are selling for approximately \$18,000 per 30-second spot, which still adds up to a tidy \$9.4 million a year in gross revenue---but not nearly what it could be if the ratings and shares were higher.

So those figures you see every week are more than just for individual promotions' bragging rights. They mean dollars at the cash register because the major wrestling shows of today are not just designed to get fans in the arenas, they are produced to bring people to products. And the more of you who watch a

# COMINGS & GOINGS

(Continued from Page 1)

particular show, the more that promotion can charge WESTERN UNION to remind you it's "the fastest way to send money." To the tune of more than \$30 million a year between the WEF and the NWA.

**MIKE'S BACK:** Mike Rotunda worked the entire western tour of the NWA and now says he does not intend to leave. Rotunda had discussions with the WEF, and admitted an open door had been left for him with Titan. But as NWA senior v.p. Jim Herd says: "We talked. We told Mike we were going to develop a suitable program for him. He was concerned when the Varsity Club was disbanded. But he was satisfied with our conversation and the matter is closed."

**WHAT ABOUT BARRY?:** Conflicting stories are coming our way on the Barry Windham situation, both from usually reliable sources. One is now telling us Barry has been given no start date with Titan. Another is saying a few matters are yet to be ironed out---but Barry is indeed going to New York. Our belief is Barry will be there, seeing how he is not listed in the upcoming PMF title tournament.

**SPEAKING OF...:** The tourney to name Dusty's successor will be a double elimination event across the state (which probably means it will be convenient just to tell TV viewers somebody was eliminated if any of these guys leave). The contenders: Steelman (our pick to win), Dustin Rhodes, Bam Bam Bigelow, Brian Knobbs, Mike Graham, Al Perez, Black Bart, Steve Keirn, the incoming Col. DeBeers and---get this---AWA champ Larry Zbyszko. I know most AWA fans won't know about it but it cheapens even the ten-cent value of the AWA title with Larry Z in another promotion's tourney.

**DADDY'S BOY:** Dustin won the Florida heavyweight title from Al Perez in a TV match, to give him both the singles and tag belts simultaneously, something I don't think even his father ever did. How long before he makes the WEF? You figure it.

**DUSTY'S PREMIERE:** I'd genuinely like to hear the views of both hardcore WEF fans and NWA loyalists to Dusty's debut horse manure segment.

**NETWORKING:** PMF is now on WTLH, an indie in Tallahassee. A new group, Suncoast Wrestling, is now on Cable Channel 25 in Bradenton FL, featuring many of the old Global guys.

**PUSHING SCORE:** The syndicators for PMF, out of New Jersey, are pressuring FNN/SCORE heavily to add PMF to the summer SCORE lineup. They're telling Danny Wolf Dusty will still be supervising the promotion and it will have closer ties to the WEF. Maybe there is something to that "minor league" story or these guys are doing a major slick job.

**GATOR BAIT:** KLON shared with me a page one story from FLORIDA TODAY in which Keirn and the Big Ball of

Cholesterol are applying for two of 250 hunting permits for the state's second annual alligator harvest. The gators, once endangered, are now overpopulating the state and game officials will hold the hunt from Sept. 1-30 to control the growth. The drawing will be at random but Keirn says, "We're doing everything we can to get in. I've even got my wife filling out an application." Wonder if Vince will send a tape crew?

**LEAVE IT TO LAWLER:** Jerry Lawler is doing some of his better interviews in some time to build his reteaming with Austin Idol in Memphis but close insiders tell us it may be a case of too little, too late because none of the CWA heels can draw the heat to make it a big-money return.

**ROSSIE & JIMMY:** Jim Ross will be the co-host of the NWA FRIDAY NIGHT POWER HOUR on TBS beginning June 23. Bob Caudle and several others had been considered but Ross got the nod last week. The show will be done in front of a live audience and I hope to attend the premiere taping.

**MORE NWA VOICES:** Jim Herd told us more adjustments will be forthcoming in the announcers' lineup but "no one is in danger of being dropped." Herd says Ross will return to the TBS version of NWA MAIN EVENT soon and Lance Russell will continue to do the syndicated NME with Paul E. Dangerously. Herd volunteered to us that former AWA and WEF announcer Ken Resnick and ex-WEFer Craig DeGeorge are getting looks, along with a third, unnamed person.

**WESTERN WOES:** Houses were poor for the NWA western swing, including a \$7,000 draw in Denver. But, in Herd's words: "We're going to these cities to let them know that the NWA is well-heeled, alive and will be there for the long haul. A lot of people are still don't see that this is a long-term rebuilding job and I'm not worried at all because I know where we intend to be going."

**DENNIS THE MENACE?:** Eric Embry and World Class have been holding out on paying PRO WRESTLING DIGEST's Dennis Brent \$544 for the WCCW arena programs because Eric is not happy about 1) some of the things written about him in newsletters and 2) some of his treatment in PWD and the programs.

**NO LARRY:** Hogan's scheduled appearance on LARRY KING LIVE (CNN) did get "rescheduled," as I was told, and I wonder if Ted Turner or his people finally got wise Vince's maneuverings. One last comment on NHB: I accept the sincerity of Hogan's emotions when he visited this group of special education children in New York. I truly believe he was touched. But, tell me---and I know you Hogan hardcores will be on me for this---but is it not coincidental that Hogan is suddenly in these touching, visiting schools situations only before he has a movie release? Let's see if he keeps this up after NHB is in the video stores.

SCALE: PINFALL! - Must See PILEDRIVER - Excellent  
POWERSLAM - Good DRAW - Average RESTHOLD - Fair BOMB  
- Poor PLUS - Midscale rating.

(SCW) - REVERSE CAGE MATCH FINISH: Samuel Kent gets egged; SCW TITLE FINALS: Joel Deaton d. David Sammartino with Knucks; Chic Donovan d. Bobby Bennett; Steve Lawler d. Steve Reeves when Dino Minelli runs in before Ga. Power arrives for brawl; Pez Whatley d. Steve Bennett. SUPER BOMB.

(ACW) - M.O.D. Squad d. Jack Jackson & David Isley; Nelson Royal d. Bobby Mack; Sam Houston d. Len Wagner; Ken Shamrock d. Brian Johnson; Brad Anderson d. Jesse James; Nikita Koloff d. Black Panther; Robert Gibson d. Speedy Gonzales; ANGLE: The D.I. throws Sha-Sha on floor, Sam Houston saves and both dressing rooms empty. BOMB-PLUS.

(WCCW) - Shaun Simpson d. Tony Falk; Iceman Parsons/Brickhouse Brown d. Dewayne Meadors/Craig Whitford; Matt Borne d. Beauty; Super Zodiac d. Eric Embry when Super Z gets chain from ref Harold Harris' pocket and uses on Embry. Frank Dusek confronts Harris and fires him (a la Jack Tunney & Danny Davis). VIDEO: Jeff Jarrett. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

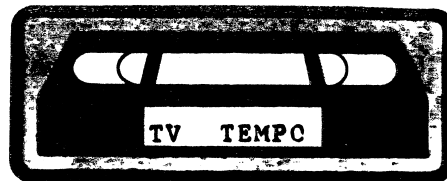
(WEF/USA) - [PRIME TIME]: Brutus Beefcake d. Tom Stone; Rick Martel d. Tim Horner; Honky Tonk Man d. Jim Povers; Haku d. Jim Evans; Bret Hart d. Randy Spear; Bad News Brown/Brooklyn Brawler d. Hillbilly Jim/Blue Blazer (Oven does job); Other winners: Foghorn Leghorn, John Studd. BEST OF WEF: Jake Roberts vs. Rick Rude. RESTHOLD.

(WEF/SYND.) - [CHALLENGE]: Haku d. Evans; Jim Neidhart d. Dave Wagner; Honky d. Red Tyler; Martel d. Lynn; Anabolic Warrior d. Scott Coulton; Other winners: Sheepwackers, Rougeaus. FEATURES: Fans NHB reax; Dusty Rhodes shoveling horse manure. BOMB.

[SPOTLIGHT]: Rockers-Rougeaus angle; Dino Bravo d. Warren Bianchi; Hart d. Spear; Studd squash; Tully & Arn d. Koko B. Ware/Blazer; Curt Hennig d. Frank DeFalco. BRO. LOVE v. Zeus; NO HOLDS reax. RESTHOLD. [SUPERSTARS]: Beefcake d. Stone; T&A d. Eddie Slater/Tom Burch; From SNME: Jimmy Snuka d. Boris Zhukov; Greg Valentine d. Chris Zarna; Tito Santana d. Jake Millman; Barbarian d. Lance Allen; Jim Duggan d. Wagner but Bobby Heenan steals crown. Duggan tosses him in & beats him and the arriving Haku. Andre the Giant then butts Duggan from behind before Studd saves and drops Andre w. punch to gut; FEATURES: BRO. LOVE v. Slick; Dusty Rhodes (debut) makes delivery for Dusty's Americana Pizza. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(PWF) - FLA. TITLE: Dustin Rhodes d. Al Perez for belt; Mike Graham d. The Gladiator; Steve Keirn d. Mick Busich; HANDICAP: Steelman d. Ric Diamond & Brady Higgins; Jomo Kenya d. Mike Awesome; Nasty Boys vs. S. Force in progress as show ends. DRAW.

(CWA) - HANDCUFF MATCH: Mason-Dixon Connection wins DQ over Wild Side when Keeper of Keys Dutch Mantel & Billy



Travis brawl and Mantel hits Travis w. chair; Travis d. The Shadow; Jerry Lawler/Austin Idol d. Hangman/Keith Roberson; PY Chu Hi/Master of Pain d. Keith Eric/Mike Masters; Action Jackson d. Van Van Horne; Brian Lee d. Alan Reynolds; Mantel d. Grappler; VIDEOS: Jeff Jarrett, Lawler/Idol. DRAW-PLUS.

(NWA/SYND.) - [NWA PRO]: Sting d. Cougar Jay; Ricky Santana d. Ric Conners; Lex Luger d. Keith Hart but Michael Hayes taunts Luger during match; From NCM: Samoan Swat Team d. Ranger Ross/Ron Simmons when Simmons signs v. Teddy Long; Ricky Steamboat wins DQ over Butch Reed when Reed hits Tommy Young; ANGLE: Sting slaps Terry Funk when Funk insults him. FEATURE: Dr. Joe Estwanik on Ric Flair's "injury." PEDICINO'S NOSE: Joe blasts Simmons for signing v. Long. DRAW.

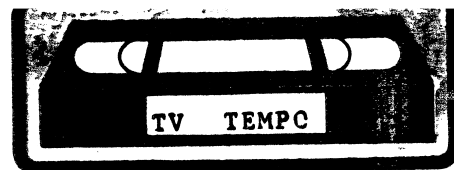
[WORLD WIDE]: Dynamic Dudes d. Joe Cazana/Deke Rivers; Luger d. Steve Casey; Muta d. Tom Bitner/Conners; Eddie Gilbert d. Jack Victory (Eddie hurt his knee here and I don't know how he finished it). From NWA PRO: Funk-Sting angle. DRAW-PLUS.

(NWA/TBS) - [NCW] - Simmons d. Ross when Teddy Long passes him Knucks; Santana d. Joe Cruz; Dick Murdoch d. George South; Steamboat d. Trent Knight; Scott Steiner d. Knight; SST d. Cazana/Rivers; Kevin Sullivan d. Bitner; Muta d. Casey; WORLD TAG TOURNEY: Midnight Express d. Reed/The Raider (Murdoch and Reed's partner, Bob Orton, brawl before match to take out Orton); Dudes d. Bob Emery/Cougar Jay. VIDEOS: Norman, Brian Pillman, Scott Hall. ANGLE: Funk brings out "Rick Flaire" (NCW p.r. man Ron Ames) & shows yellow streak on his back. Sting comes out to "defend the NWA" and he and Funk get into major brawl requiring a pullapart. RECAP: Road Warriors-SST brawls. POWERSLAM.

[MAIN EVENT]: SST d. Randy Rose/Scott Steiner; Santana d. Victory; Funk d. Johnny Rich. REPLAY: "Rick Flaire" angle. DRAW-PLUS.

(PORTLAND) - S. Rockers d. C.W. Bergstrom/Al Madril; Carl Stiles vs. Col. DeBeers double countout; Beetlejuice wins DQ over Jonathan Boyd; Sockty the Bodv d. Rex King and tries to put dress on Rex before Rockers save; Midnight Soldier wins DQ over Grappler when Nord the Barbarian nails Soldier w. chain but Stiles saves and starts 4-way brawl. ANGLES: 1) Grappler ordered to unmask and shows painted face; 2) Billy Jack Haynes apologizes for competing with Don Owen, says he's bankrupt, been sued for divorce and is retiring; 3) ROSE GARDEN: Madril says he's taking over seg. Stiles offers Ginger a baby pig. POWERSLAM.

(AWA) - Tom Zenk d. Steve Butler; Wahoo McDaniel draw v. Mike George; TV TITLE: Akio Sato wins DQ over Greg Gagne when Greg throws salt at Sato. RECAPS: Olympians-Destruction Crew carlift, Badd Company split. BOMB.



(CMF) - RECAP SHOW: angles featuring Ricky Morton-Tom Prichard, Bill Dundee & Adrian Street vs. Japanese Connection, Wendell Cooley-Stomper Harris, Danny Davis-Kevin Dillinger. **DRAM-PLUS.**

**LINE OF THE WEEK** - 1. Michael Hayes & Jim Ross, TBS: MH, "Ted Turner's so happy to finally have a winning franchise." JR, "Skip Caray won't like that." MH, "Skip Caray don't sign our paychecks." 2. Dusty Rhodes, WEF: "Doo-doo is good for me and doo-doo is good for you." 3. Hayes, TBS: "Teddy Long's like Mother Teresa. He tries to help the needy." 4. Vince McMahon, TODAY: "Acting for Hulk Hogan is really a very, very difficult thing." 5. Terry Funk, NWA: "Ric Flair, call 911 and be rescued from total fear." 6. Jim Cornette, NME: "Anyone getting in the ring with the Midnight Express would rather give birth to a 22-pound porcupine." 7. Rhodes, WEF: "Here's a pigs feet pizza with a little extra snout on the side." 8. Sean Mooney, WEF: "The Rooster vised up about the Brain and flew the coop." 9. Arsenio Hall, to Hulk Hogan: "Your arm is big as my leg." 10. Paul E. Dangerously, to Lance Russell, NME: "You play the lawyer. You play Perry Mason and try to get stuff out of me."

11. Jim Ross, TBS, on Teddy Long: "He'll never be **EBONY** Magazine's **MAN OF THE YEAR**." 12. Marc Lowrance, MCCW: "Did you hear me call him (Super Zodiac) Gorgeous Gary? I apologize. I have no proof of that." 13. Tim Dicks, SCW: "Joel Deaton is a world class athlete. He's a great golfer." 14. Hayes, TBS: "Ever wonder what Elvis Presley looked like 2 days after he died? Deke Rivers is it." 15. Bobby Heenan, PTW: "I'd like to sit behind him (Anabolic Warrior) and put gum in his hair." 16. Jerry Lawler, CWA: "Gossett, you're gonna need an industrial strength stretcher when I get through with you." 17. Jesse Ventura, WEF, to McMahon: "Maybe you'd like it if I left and you did the whole thing. Then there'd be letters." 18. Ross, TBS, on Gary Hart: "He's Uncle Fester, maybe, not Uncle Gary." 19. Cornette, TBS: "I'm ready to talk so fast, my gums catch fire from friction." 20. Frank Dusek, MCCW: "I don't know if Harold Harris is on the take or just inept."

21. Hogan, CBS THIS MORNING: "I hope the movie will show people I'm really a cool guy." 22. Al Madril, Portland: "Hey, Coss, your hair's nice and wavy. It's waving bye-bye." 23. Lee Marshall, AWA: "I wonder how much a Wahoo McDaniel football card is worth."

**STRONGEST COMMENTS** - 1. Bryant Gumbel & McMahon, TODAY: BG, "Wrestling is really acting, by definition." VM, "Maybe by YOUR definition." 2. Ventura, WEF: "These are ath-e-letes with big egos, McMahon." 3. Paul E., NME: "I won the battle of the minds (with Cornette) & it's over." 4. Billy Jack Haynes, Portland: "My heart is gone & I'm gonna retire."

**QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK** - 1. Funk, NWA, to Sting: "What's your first name, boy? Bee? Or is your last name Ray?"

2. Funk, to Sting: "You're the world TV champion. What are you gonna be next? The World Washing Machine champion? Are you gonna have a Maytag or a Lady Kenmore on your belt?" 3. Kathleen Sullivan, CBS: "Isn't wrestling really acting?" 4. Ventura, WEF: "Would you let Beefcake cut your hair, McMahon?" 5. Ventura, WEF: "Do you think the IQ of the 2 of them (Sheepvackers) together could reach triple figures?"

**NICKNAMES OF THE WEEK** - 1. "Super Sorry Tuits," given by Hawk to SST. 2. "The Henry Kissinger of wrestling," by Ross to Long. 3. "Peanuthead," by Cornette to Long. 4. "The Skillful Surgeon," given by Skandor Akbar to himself. 5. "The Bimbo Basher," by Funk to himself.

**TRUTH-IN-ADVERTISING** - Hogan, HALL SHOW: "It (NHB) is all squeaky clean for the little Hulksters," right before clip showing Hogan beating the tar out of a guy.

**BEST PICTURES** - 1. USA, Heenan holding black kitten. 2. TBS; Kevin Sullivan's wife crying after abuse from KS. 3. TBS, Sting-Funk brawl. 4. MCCW, Zodiac getting chain from Harris' pocket.

**BOO AWARDS** - 1. WEF, for trying to pass off those "post-movie" interviews as spontaneous. The SPOTLIGHT show aired here THURSDAY, the day before NHB premiered. 2. SCW, for showing its cliffhanger match first, leaving the order of remaining matches confusing.

**TUBE TALK:** Editing of the Road Warriors-SST brawl recap was as good as I've seen in the NWA... If NO HOLDS didn't have a good weekend, it won't be from the lack of a blitz but Vince's interviews were all comatose... From here, the Ross-Hayes combo was never better than Saturday on WCW... The Andre-Haku vs. Studd-Duggan brawl on WEF was okay but it could have been great if Studd & Andre could move.

WCW starts at 7:05 both next week and June 17 before the move back to 6:05... Young Tim Dicks is really trying on SCW. At least he speaks in complete sentences... I'll be on WKOX in the Boston area for a late Friday night call-in show later this month... Gordon Solie isn't helped on PMF having to adept to changing color commentators every week... Finally, does it not seem Teddy Long is already over big? Cornette's "Peanuthead" label really stuck.

Late word Sunday is that NO HOLDS is considered a big bomb: very soft attendance in the Northeast and in L.A. and most theatre people expect it will be pulled in most locales after 1 week... the Funk-Sting brawl on WCW played out longer than most recent ones on TBS but I want to see one rip loose for a full 5 or 6 minutes... State of the AWA: only 3 matches, two featuring people no longer working for Verne.



I feel as strongly as you do concerning TBS' scheduling of the Saturday WCW show. I love the NBA...but to see all those LITE-A -MAYIA commercials on TBS with Jesse, McMahon & Overlund and then not see one promo for WCW or NWA MAIN EVENT is almost infuriating.

TERRY BAKER  
WICHITA KS

(FSB: Those LITE spots were sold in a package for TBS' NBA games before the decision was made to do the Ventura spots. I think the return of WCW to 6:05 June 24 indicates TBS is listening to its viewers.)

I thought the WRESTLE WAR '89 show was the best PPV event ever from start to finish. Even Sting and the bullrope match were perfect.

DAVID DAVIS  
LOS ANGELES CA

Please make a correction on that Cauliflower Alley Club. JOHN Tolos attended the banquet, not Chris (who still lives in Hamilton, Ontario). John is a super person—talked with him not long ago.

DIANE DEVINE  
DENVER CO

(FSB: Diane also pointed out an error in our recent I REMEMBER on Bobby Shane's death. The plane which crashed was flying TO Tampa from Miami, when it crashed into the bay.)

I really enjoy MATWATCH and think you are doing a tremendous job but could you please stop calling the ULTIMATE Warrior the ANABOLIC Warrior? First off, the Warrior doesn't take steroids (I know this for a fact). Second, he doesn't like it (I know this for a fact as well). So please don't refer to him in that term any more.

KEVIN SCONDOTTO  
BROOKLYN NY

I live on Long Island, which is predominantly WWF territory so I appreciate the insights on the NWA. I wish the NWA would make an attempt to return to the Nassau Coliseum. The occasional WWF shows there are horrendous.

JOHN A. D'AMATO  
BELLMORE NY

(FSB: There are no plans for a Big Apple return yet, but I'm betting the NWA will make that stab if they can improve the 2 a.m. time slot on WPIX. Before then, it's wasteful to try.)

MATWATCH continues to be one of the leaders in the weekly wrestling bulletin battle. Secondly, this goes out to all of Vince Jr.'s critics: the man is a marketing genius. In 1982 and 83 when Vince took over the WWF, it was a small but prospering promotion which ran cards mainly in the Northeast. Their champion, the great Bob Backlund, was loved by fans and critics. When Bob was no longer marketable, Vince did the right thing: he brought in AWA legend Hulk Hogan. HULKAMANIA caught fire then and there. (FSB: the writer then gives us a brief post-1984 WWF history).

Is the world set for a Bob Backlund return to the U.S.? Well, I am friends with Bob and he told me that the only way he would come back is if he knows the people would like to see him wrestle again.

MIKE STACK  
BRANCHBURG NJ

(FSB: In respect to Mr. Backlund's privacy, I will not publish the address listed. Anyone wishing to comment on a Backlund return may write MATWATCH and we will forward the mail to him.)

One line destined to go down as classic was from the "Dapper Yapper" (Jim Ross) himself when Michael Hayes was talking about how Turner finally has a winning team and Ross says, "Well, the Braves win one every once in a while." That had me on the floor. I love it that the basketball and baseball announcers are "too

# YOU SAID IT!

good" to "shill" wrestling; yet, the wrestling ratings, even when bad are better than either one of them.

SMH  
MECHANICVILLE NY

(FSB: It is true that the NWA had a big plug from one of the Astros players, who's a big fan—but I'm not sure the mainline TBS sports announcers will ever be big ring fans. To be fair, also, the NBA playoff ratings on TBS have been much bigger than the NWA's of late, but Michael Jordan's heroics didn't hurt.)

For what it's worth, I agree fully on WRESTLE WAR '89; it was the best special show since Turner bought the NWA. Their syndies are quite good again, and I spread the word about them whenever I get the chance. I'm also pleased to see the impending return of Jimmy Garvin a definite plus. The recent firings of JYD and Iron Sheik wre for the best, as both were well past the crest of the hill.

I do see ATLANTIC COAST WRESTLING every week. I must say it's not because their shows are great; fair-good is about the best rating I can give them. I find their shows to be fairly dull most of the time and their lack of stars really hurts.

JEFF FISHER  
LAKE TOXAWAY NC

I really hope (Ted) DiBiase is NWA bound. They could keep him heel but have him publicly get rid of the MILLION \$ MAN gimmick, saying he is a real wrestler and doesn't have to pretend to be a millionaire to get matches in the NWA.

ED VARNER  
SEATTLE WA

Who is really responsible for the turnaround in the NWA TV shows? I'd like to write them a letter of thanks.

JOE CLARK  
BARDSTOWN KY

(FSB: I'm sure they'd say it's a team effort, but start with chief operating officer Jim Herd, Jim Ross (who is working mankilling hours on booking, as well as announcing), Eddie Gilbert, Kevin Sullivan, Ric Flair, etc. Write them at Box 105366, One CNN CENTER, Atlanta GA 30348-5366).

You NWA fans may think it's all back in the right direction but ask yourself, why aren't people going to the live shows? Simple: the general public wants what Vince is giving them and the NWA may as well accept that as gospel. They'd rather see Savage and Sherri Martel jump Brutus Beefcake than Terry Funk piledrive Ric Flair.

RICHARD COSTANZO  
SALEM MA

As a journalist myself, I resent the inference that you're compromising your NWA coverage by talking to Jim Herd and Jack Petrik. If you are fortunate enough to be able to have these executives as sources, it's like covering city hall: maybe you don't call them every day but at some point, you have to get confirmation of events and transactions. I've followed MATWATCH since the start of Turner's NWA era and I've never construed your coverage as diluted at all. Keep it going.

GEORGE JACKSON  
CORAL GABLES FL

I dunno, Steve, maybe my eyes are different than everyone else's but the post-match Funk-out looked more embarrassing than anything else to me. First, he can't piledrive Flair, and so Ric literally has to HOLD HIMSELF IN THE AIR WITH HIS ARMS BRACED ALONG THE TABLE SIDES. Flair then lowers himself to the table in the poorest piledriver-on-the-table I can remember seeing...seriously, is it me? Is there something wrong with my eyes or did people simply see what they wanted to see?

Funk's subsequent interview was indeed a humdinger but I can't help feeling that this angle would have been even better if run with another wrestler---a certain Rowdy Scot Moviestar. Speaking of Piper, Paul E.'s impressions are getting better and better but he oughtta be careful imitating Piper since his "regular" voice is MUCH too much like Roderick's.

BILL KUNKEL  
WOODHAVEN NY

RATINGS RAP: SYNDICATION

Week Ending May 14	Rating	Stations	Pct. U.S.
WWF	9.0	247	97%
NWA	5.2	144	90%

(ANALYSIS: Basic hold-steady evolution for both groups and I'm doubtful now if you'll see a lot of movement in either group for the summer.)

RATINGS RAP: CABLE

Week Ending May 29	Rating	Share	Total Homes
WWF PRIME TIME (USA 5/29)	2.7	4.6	1.36 million
WWF ALL-AMERICAN (USA 5/28)	2.4	7.5	1.14 million
NWA WORLD CHAMP. (TBS 5/27)	1.6	4.1	776,000
NWA MAIN EVENT (TBS 5/28)	1.5	4.1	729,000
NWA M.E. (A.M.) (TBS 5/27)	0.5	3.8	243,000

(ANALYSIS: Memorial Day weekend threw virtually every show for both groups into a tailspin---as it did for network ratings both Saturday and Sunday. MAIN EVENT registered its season low. Insiders believe WCW is still suffering from the bouncing ball time period, though the 1.6 came at 7:05 p.m.)

\*\*\* MATWATCH SHOPPERS NETWORK \*\*\*

(Video Tapes)

CEE-DEE PRODUCTIONS, P.O. BOX 3626, UNION NJ 07083, is offering the full half-hour match of The British Bulldogs vs. The Rock & Roll Express from Kansas City for \$24.95 plus \$3 for handling. Out of U.S. add \$5.00.

GARY CUBETA, P.O. BOX 2376, MIDDLETOWN CT 06457, is offering to sell, trade or buy VHS tapes. He particularly wants old Texas or Georgia shows.

(Newsletters)

New address for subscribers to Ron Lemieux's ARENA REPORT: 370 LAKE TAHOE CT., #102, ALTAMONTE SPRINGS FL 36330. 50 cents an issue.

PRO WRESTLING TORCH is pushing to reach 300 subscribers and I endorse it highly. It's \$1.25 per issue every 2 weeks from WADE KELLER, P.O. BOX 201844, MINNEAPOLIS MN 55420.

(Merchandise)

IAN ROBSON, INTERNATIONAL PRO WRESTLING ENTERPRISES, 2/105 WINDSOR AVE., HASTINGS, NEW ZEALAND, has pictures, buttons and souvenirs of international stars. Write him for a list.

MONDO, P.O. BOX 15243, PHILADELPHIA PA 19125, has T-shirts for \$10 or 3 for \$25. Featured are Bruiser Brody, Tor Johnson and Abdullah shirts.

ANNIVERSARY QUESTIONS

Our double issue first anniversary issue will be out June 26 and I would like to devote a section to answering your questions on issues, the future of wrestling/TV, etc. Please drop your questions to me at 213 PINE HILLS AVENUE, AUBURN AL 36830 before June 15.

\*\*\*\*\* 500: WE'RE GETTING CLOSE \*\*\*\*\*

As of last Thursday, our subscriber base had reached 494, so we're only six away from the magic 500 and the free 8-issue set to the 500th subscriber (or to the giver of that order, if a gift).  
U.S. RATES: \$5 for 8 issues, \$26 for 1 year.  
OVERSEAS: \$7 for 7 issues, \$50 for 1 year.

After July 15

U.S.: \$6 for 7 issues, \$36 for 1 year, \$19 for 26 weeks.  
OVERSEAS: \$10 for 7, \$36 for 26, \$65 for 1 year.

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